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"Report of Professional Selection Panel Activities"

1. This report is concerned primarily with
  - a. A summary of the 34 cases considered by the panel between 12 December 1952 and 20 February 1953
  - b. A request for guidance and information respecting those cases in which the Panel's recommendations are not followed
  - c. A tentative statement of 18 criteria bearing on suitability for career employment in CIA.
2. Attached to the report is memorandum of conversation concerning the workings of the Board of Examiners of the Foreign Service.
3. The Panel requests guidance from the Board on 1 b and 1 c above.

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24 February 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: CIA Career Service Board

FROM: Professional Selection Panel

SUBJECT: Report of Professional Selection Panel Activities

1. Six months having passed since the creation of the Professional Selection Panel, it is considered appropriate that the Panel furnish to the CIA Career Service Board a report of its activities.

2. On 20 November 1952 the Panel received instructions from the Chairman, CIA Career Service Board, which stated:

"The Board recognizes that the Panel can not implement at this time all phases of the selection program specified in CIA Notice [REDACTED]. It does, however, desire that the Panel should give priority to:

- a. the formulation of criteria concerning over-all suitability to work in CIA on a career basis,
- b. examination of individual cases of applicants or trial-service employees ... where doubt is cast on suitability to work in CIA on a career basis as a result of the development of administrative or marginal information by the three Offices mentioned above (Security, Medical and Personnel) and the Office of Training,
- c. recommendation to the appropriate authority for the disposition of each case so examined."

Since the receipt of the above directive, there have been submitted to the Panel 34 cases, which have been disposed of as follows:

- 13 Recommended as suitable for career employment.
- 13 Recommended as not suitable for career employment.
- 4 Pending - awaiting further information, awaiting interviews with applicant, or to be reconsidered prior to expiration of trial service.
- 4 Withdrawn by the forwarding Office or not considered by the Panel to be appropriate for its consideration.

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3. In one of the cases considered, the Panel's vote was 4 to 1. In all other cases the vote has been unanimous.

4. The Panel has been informed that its recommendations have been followed by the Assistant Director (Personnel) in all cases but two. The two exceptions were cases No. 5 and No. 25. The Panel believes that its work would profit greatly if it could be informed officially and in some detail as to the reasons for employing these two individuals in the face of adverse findings by the Panel. The Panel recognizes that there will be instances when, for policy reasons, the Agency will find it appropriate to employ an individual even though he may not appear to be suitable for career employment. Case No. 5 appears to fall in this category. Insofar as information made available to the Panel indicates, such policy considerations are not present in case No. 25. It appears, therefore, that in that case a higher authority has reversed the Panel's finding that the individual is not suitable for career employment by CIA. If the Panel is to accumulate knowledge and experience which will enable it to do the best possible job for the Agency, it should be informed of the considerations which led to the reversal of its findings in case No. 25.

5. In addition to examining these cases, the Panel has devoted considerable time, during its 19 regular meetings and 3 special evening sessions, to the formulation of criteria for determining over-all suitability to work in CIA on a career basis. The Panel believes that final criteria for suitability will only emerge after a great deal of practical experience has been gained in examining specific cases. Obviously, the consideration of only 34 cases, all of them being instances "where doubt exists as to suitability," has not given the Panel the needed experience to formulate criteria. On the other hand, the five Panel members represent an aggregate of approximately 40 years of varied experience in the intelligence field, and the Panel's advisors represent a total of between 30 and 40 years of experience in their specialized fields. Thus the Panel, while lacking great depth of experience as a unit, has a great deal of extremely varied experience to draw from in formulating criteria.

6. There is attached hereto a tentative statement of criteria for suitability formulated by the Panel. It is desired to emphasize the tentative nature of this statement and also to point out that any compilation of selection criteria must be subject to constant revision and redefinition.

7. The Panel would greatly appreciate the comments of the Board, or of any individual members thereof, concerning its activities as reported herein.

/s/



- 2 -

~~SECRET~~

Attachment

Chairman

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PROFESSIONAL SELECTION PANEL

Tentative Statement of Selection Criteria Bearing On  
Suitability for Career Service in CIA

The Professional Selection Panel was instructed by the CIA Career Service Board to give priority to the "formulation of criteria concerning over-all suitability to work in CIA on a career basis".

There are set forth below certain basic qualities which are to be sought in applicants and trial-service employees. Under each quality are listed one or more questions which are among those the Panel would attempt to answer in an effort to decide whether the individual applicant was possessed of the desired quality. The questions are intended to guide the Panel and are in no way suggested as questions to be put to the applicant. These criteria do not, of course, take into account technical qualifications to fill a specific position.

ETHICAL ADJUSTMENT

1. INTEGRITY

Would lack of supervision, inspection or review lower his standard of performance?

Can he be expected to remain honest to himself and to others?

2. MORALITY

Can he maintain high moral standards for his personal conduct?

Could he, in the national interest, engage in activities which conflict with those standards?

3. FAITHFULNESS

Will he loyally support a course of action which has been officially determined even though he may disagree?

Would he secretly try to undermine a policy adopted by his superiors while outwardly supporting it?

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PSYCHOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENT

4. OBJECTIVITY

Can he reach logical conclusions despite personal bias?

5. ADAPTABILITY

Can he and does he willingly conform to new job requirements?

Can he adjust to trying working conditions?

6. ANONYMITY

Does he recognize and accept the fact that public notice is incompatible with a career in CIA?

Does he feel compelled to call attention to himself and to his work?

7. ACCEPTANCE OF DISCIPLINE

Can he relinquish independence of action in the interest of organizational integrity and control?

8. EMOTIONAL CONTROL

Can he maintain effectiveness despite heavy demands, unusual stresses or disturbing working conditions?

INTELLECTUAL READINESS

9. CAREER DESIRE

Are his reasons sound for seeking an intelligence career in CIA?

Is he willing to give the job and the Agency a fair trial?

10. DISCRETION

Has he an appreciation of the need for discretion, and possibly for dissembling, in the handling of official information?

- 2 -

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PERSONAL READINESS

11. ECONOMIC PREPAREDNESS

Can he accept the limitations of a Government salary?

12. FREEDOM OF ACTION

To what extent will family, economic, religious, political, moral or other personal considerations interfere with his freedom of action?

SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT

13. SENSE OF PERSONAL PROPORTION

Does he take himself too seriously?

Can he laugh at himself?

14. SOCIAL ACCEPTABILITY

Is he a person with whom you would like to work closely?

Would you welcome him as a guest in your home?

15. COOPERATION

Does he establish congenial and friendly relationships with others?

Can he work effectively as a member of a team?

PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY

16. INDUSTRY

Is he capable of sustained hard work?

17. EFFECTIVE INTELLIGENCE

Is he capable of resourcefulness and ingenuity in planning and carrying out activities?

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Can he make decisions effectively?

Can he learn and remember detailed knowledge?

Can he express himself adequately (communicate ideas)?

Can he effectively use the services and abilities of other people?

18. VISION

Can he think and act imaginatively?

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17 February 1953

MEMORANDUM OF RECORD

SUBJECT: Conversation held with Mr. Cromwell A. Riches, Executive Director of the Board of Examiners for the Foreign Service, Department of State, on 15 January 1953 [REDACTED]

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1. Mr. Riches is a member of the Board of Examiners for the Foreign Service; he is also Executive Director of the Board of Examiners and is, in addition, a Deputy Examiner. [The Board of Examiners for the Foreign Service (Sec. 212 (a) Public Law 724, 79th Congress, as amended) "shall... under the general supervision of the Board of the Foreign Service, provide for and supervise the conduct of such examinations as may be given to candidates for appointment as Foreign Service officers".]

2. The Deputy Examiners are the only persons who actually conduct the oral examinations of Foreign Service Officer candidates. No other persons except Deputy Examiners are admitted to the oral examinations. The Deputy Examiners number thirty-five at present and are elected by the Board of Examiners. In conducting the elections of the Deputy Examiners, the Board of Examiners receives nominations, together with detailed biographical data, from those elements of the Government that are represented on the Board of the Foreign Service (e.g., State, Agriculture, Commerce and Labor) and elects the examiners on the basis of their qualifications and skill for oral interview and examination. Since examination is their sole function, this skill is the principal criterion on which the selection of the Deputy Examiners is based, although it is admitted that skill in oral examination is difficult to determine without seeing the individual in action. All Deputy Examiners are of Grade GS-15 or equivalent and above in order to insure a basic level of maturity. Their election is by secret ballot.

3. The same Panels of Deputy Examiners sit in oral examination for both junior and lateral entry candidates /Class 6 "junior" candidates - salary range \$3993 to \$5093; Class 5 to Class 1 "lateral entry" candidates - salary range \$5313 to \$11,300/. It is argued that the traits of character and personality in which the Board is interested are the same no matter what level of entrant is being considered.

4. The examining workload for the present year is estimated to be 325 junior candidates of which about 200 can be accepted. Note that these candidates have already passed the written examinations and will have their

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physical examination when they report (at their own expense) for the oral examination. In addition enough examinations will be conducted to produce about 400 lateral entry officers (Class 5 to Class 1). Note that these candidates are for the most part already in Washington having been employed either departmentally (i.e., Civil Service) in the Department of State or as Foreign Service Staff Officers for the past three or four years. Written examinations are not required of lateral entry personnel. In summary, about 65% of the junior candidates are passed by the oral examination and about 40% of the lateral entry candidates.

5. Examinations heretofore have been held only in Washington although the Board has often considered journeying to the West Coast in order to ease the burden of cost to the candidate. There are many practical obstacles to so doing, however.

6. The Panels of Deputies - five per Panel - assemble every morning at 9:15 and complete their work by about 1:00 P.M. Mr. Riches chairs the Panels twice a week and his Deputy, a Foreign Service officer, Class 2, three times a week. Junior candidates and lateral entry candidates are considered on different days because the data and records are in different form. The individual Deputy Examiners, however, consider both types of candidates as the occasion arises. The oral examination of a junior candidate takes about one hour (three per morning) while the oral examination of a lateral entry candidate takes longer (two per morning). "Outside" Deputy Examiners (Agriculture, Labor and Commerce) are not expected to work on a Panel oftener than once a week. Before a Deputy Examiner is allowed to take part in the actual examination he is expected to audit six Panels in order to acquire the basis for oral examining skill and to provide for understanding and continuity of the process.

7. The Deputy Examiners come to the Panel without prior briefing and work from a sheaf of documentation that is provided to them. It takes one qualified analyst (GS-7) about a full day to prepare each case. Workload: 12 cases per week; 2-3 GS-7 analysts. It is important to note that Mr. Riches placed great stress on the fact that this documentation a) does not leave the office of the Board of Examiners, b) does not go into the general personnel files, c) is not available to any person except the Deputy Examiners on the Panel immediately concerned. For example, this documentation is not available even to the Director General of the Foreign Service.

8. After the oral examination, the candidate retires and the Panel discusses the case. For lateral entry candidates (Class 5 to Class 1), each Deputy Examiner then scores the candidate on a 1 to 5 grade for about eight factors. The composite score of 3.2 is considered to be "passing". If the

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score is high (say 4 or better) there is no further discussion. If the score is low (say 2.5 or less) there is no further discussion. If the score is medium (say 2.5 to 4) the case is rediscussed and the Examiners may change their scoring as a result of the discussion before another summation and average is struck. Changes tend to be down rather than up and the Panels tend to be "conservative" with respect to "suitability". The analysis and final result is dictated for the record on the spot.

9. The selection technique and scoring is the same for junior candidates (Class 6) but there are three grades of "passing", a) with distinction, b) passing, c) defer. These grades determine the place a candidate goes on the list, if there is a waiting list.

10. The vote of the Panel, the scoring, the score, etc., is concealed from the "outside world", i.e., from all persons except those present in the room. Only the result is announced. No pressure from "up the line" is ever made on the Panel to accept or reject a candidate. There has never been reconsideration of a case by the Panel (although this was suggested once about 5 years ago.) However, about 1945 the Director General of the Foreign Service struck from the list the name of a candidate before it was sent to the President. There was quite a row. All the Deputy Examiners resigned. As a result the Secretary of State instructed the Director General henceforth to forward the list without comment. It is extremely important to note that the appointing authority in the case of Foreign Service officers is the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. Since 1945 the President and the Senate have always followed the recommendations of the Board of Examiners. It is recognized that both the President and the Senate have the right to act differently if they so choose. Note also that the Board of Examiners is not concerned with Foreign Service Staff Officers, Foreign Service Reserve Officers or Departmental personnel for which a different appointing authority exists.7

11. Mr. Riches invited the undersigned to audit an examining Panel, subject to later confirmation, if that would be useful to CIA.

/s/ 

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